



NASA STTR 2014 Phase I Solicitation

T4.02 Regolith Resources Robotics - R3

Lead Center: KSC

Participating Center(s): ARC, LaRC

The use of robotics for In-Situ Resource Utilization (ISRU) in outer space on various planetary bodies is essential since it uses large quantities of regolith that must be acquired and processed. In some cases this will happen while the crew is not there yet, or it will take place at a remote destination where the crew cannot spend much time due to radiation exposure limits (Asteroids, Mar's Moons and NEO's). Communications latencies of greater than 40 minutes at Asteroids mandate autonomous robotics applications. Proposals are sought which provide solutions for the following space resource related technology area:

Asteroid Resource Prospecting and Characterization - The first step towards using resources derived from small bodies in space, such as water, volatiles, metals and organic compounds is to visit the Near Earth Object (NEO) target body and prospect it with sample acquisition devices and subsequently do characterization of these samples. Proposals are sought for innovative resource prospecting mission concepts and associated technology demonstrations such as autonomous small marsupial free flyer prospector spacecraft that can sample an asteroid, comet or Mars moon and transport the sample back to a locally orbiting spacecraft with an associated suite of characterization instruments for analysis.